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CERAMICS

LONGWY FAÏENCE.



HUART BROTHERS' factory, whence comes the beautiful faïence fountain of which we present herewith an illustration, is one of the largest of its kind in France. It grew out of the workshop of M. Huart de Northcomb, established at Longwy more than forty years ago. The faïence is generally characterized by groundwork of a scaly or cracked appearance, the scales sometimes presenting a very rich effect by the employment of two or more shades of some light color; and the attractiveness of these is enhanced by the slight relief produced by decoration in colored stanniferous enamel. Bottles, pitchers, plaques, and trays of Longwy ware, all more or less Oriental in treatment, may be found in any of the large ceramic stores. The crackle employed is usually open and irregular; it never extends to the decoration, which, apparently, is graven in the enamel and afterward filled in with the required colors. Bright colors are almost invariably used in the enamelling, and the effect of the ware is often highly decorative. The subject of our illustration, which is a piece of unusual size, was at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. It is light and graceful in form, and is Japanesque alike in shape and ornament.

ARTISTIC STONE-WARE.

SOME interesting experiments in salt glaze by Professor A. A. Breneman, who fills the chair of industrial chemistry at Cornell University, have led to the first production in this country of some very desirable colors for stone-ware. As many of our readers know, stone-ware—unlike ordinary earthen-ware, china, and faïence, the body of which is first made and fired, the glaze being applied by a later and second operation—is converted from dry clay into a glazed piece of pottery by a single firing. Hence the difficulty of decorating stone-ware, and it is enhanced by the imperviousness of the material, which is very dense, is all through alike, and of sufficiently close texture to resist the action of acids and chemicals generally. The ware is fired at a heat much in excess of that usual, or even necessary, for ordinary earthenware, and is glazed with salt. Everything—from the throwing of the vessel during its decoration to the coloring—must be done before the piece is fired, and while it is still in the clay stage. In Lambeth, a suburb of London, where artistic stone-ware is made almost to perfection at the famous Doulton factory, difficult greens, pinks, and yellows have been successfully applied in decoration. But in this country cobalt blue, so far as we are aware, is the only color that has been satisfactorily employed. Professor Breneman's experiments have led to the production of several other salt-glaze colors. Recently he has submitted to our inspection a beautiful green and a lilac, baked upon a piece of stone-ware, which were quite free from craze. The professor has also produced a useful pink and a good range of yellows. Stone-ware is so cheap and so commonly in use that it is desirable that, as a medium for improving the popular taste, it should be made as beautiful as possible, and as a step to the furtherance of that end, we trust that our American potters will interest themselves in the professor's experiments.

It is not creditable to our national enterprise that, although we have every opportunity, we make no progress whatever in the form or decoration of our stone-ware. No attempt has been made to give us anything better in this material than the common utensils of domestic use. Yet there are numerous excellent models at hand from the Lambeth Works, and there are even among us artists who have graduated from the Doulton factory. Mr. John Bennett, of New York, if we are correctly informed, gave the Doultons the secret of his under-glaze firing in exchange for theirs of salt-glaze coloring.

As long ago as 1874, there were seven methods of decoration in use at the Doulton factory, which Mr. John Sparkes, in a recent lecture before the Society of Arts, in London, summarized as follows:

1. Scratching or cutting the pattern in the clay very soon after it leaves the thrower's wheel. A line scratched at this time leaves a ridge on each edge of the tool, and this "burr" limits the color applied to the pattern by its mechanical projection.



FAÏENCE FOUNTAIN.

MADE AND DECORATED AT LONGWY BY HUART BROTHERS.

2. Cutting into the clay some hours after the piece has been thrown, when it is in the state called "green hard." At this time there is no burr, which breaks off if it is raised; therefore, a line is more scooped out than cut in. It serves, to some extent, as a limiting agent to some colors, but more frequently it gives a hold to the pigment, and deepens its color by its greater depth of substance.

3. Whitening the body.

4. Dipping the ordinary body, which is like the usual brown stone-ware, in a slip of lighter color, which gives the opportunity of cutting through the lighter surface, so as to expose the deeper tone of the body below.

5. Carving out mouldings, by cutting into ridges or projections left for the purpose by the thrower, a method by which a certain amount of light and shade may be introduced into the ware.

6. The application of dots, disks, rosettes, and innumerable other figures from moulds, impressed on the surface of the ware, so as to adhere to it.

7. Similarly, depressed patterns are stamped into the surface of the clay, to form a hollow for the lodgment of the color as it oozes in the intense heat.

Since 1874, the development of the work in the fine-art section of the Lambeth pottery has been remarkable. Uniform success now seems to characterize the productions of the kilns. Mr. Sparkes says: "Various improvements in detail, especially in the setting of the ware in the kilns, a better experience in the firing, gained by the practice of burning for Doulton ware, which formerly took its chance among the miscellaneous contents of the kilns, tend to this higher percentage of success; but, in the details of the decoration, and, to some extent, of the manufacture, great advance has been made. Various new bodies have been found, which work remarkably well under the trying conditions of the salt-glaze kiln, and give change of texture and variety of surface; various materials and colors have been found, which work well as decoration on these bodies; and additional artists, nearly all students of the Lambeth school, who bring their peculiar and individual tastes to bear in the working-out of these new materials, and in the experiments in original methods, and in other directions, help, by ideas and skilled handicraft, to forward the good work."

It will be remembered that, in an illustrated article on "Artistic Decorative Pottery," published in THE ART AMATEUR (December, 1879), some account was given of the artistic stone-ware produced at the Lambeth factory. The recent experiments in salt-glaze by Professor Breneman, however, give a new and a national interest to the subject, and we are pleased to have occasion to recur to it.

PREHISTORIC BRITISH EARTHENWARE.

THE remarkable collection of antiquarian relics brought together by Canon Greenwell, of Durham, during his diggings in nearly 250 barrows, in various parts of England and Scotland, and presented to the British Museum, contains more than two hundred vessels of pottery, which may be divided into cinerary urns, food-vessels, drinking-cups, and incense-cups. These names have been somewhat arbitrarily bestowed upon them by antiquaries, but it is convenient to retain them until we have some good ground for applying others. All this pottery is but slightly baked, and is generally ornamented with zigzags and other primitive decorations, made by impressing on the soft clay a twisted cord, or by scoring it with a pointed instrument. The larger specimens are the cinerary urns, with a broad band round the upper part, slightly overhanging the body of the vase. Among these may be noticed one from Bamborough, Northumberland, with singular rows of projecting scallops, and two others with zigzags in high relief. Otherwise the type is very uniform, but in shape quite unlike the cinerary urns of any other country. There are a few diminutive specimens which can hardly have been used for burned bones, and, in fact, have rarely been found containing them. The so-called food-vessels are smaller in size than the urns, much more richly ornamented, and sometimes of considerable elegance, both in form and decoration. Among them is one from Goodmanham, of which the truth of the outline, the fineness of the

clay, and the delicacy of the ornamentation are remarkable. The drinking-cups may well have been used for the purpose to which they have been assigned. They are thinner in substance than the other vases, and taper off toward the edge, narrower in shape than the food vessels, and still more richly ornamented.

The most singular vessels, however, are the so-called incense-cups. They are small, very fantastic and various in shape, and often have perforations, forming, in some instances, almost a basket of open work. It is not easy to conjecture to what use these curious vessels could have been applied. The best suggestion that has been made is that they were employed to carry a live ember with which to kindle the funeral pyre. One remarkable example has a cover almost as large as itself, which does not in any way support most of the theories that have been propounded as to the use of these cups, which seem peculiar to the British Islands. It is, however, a question whether the bulk of the vessels found in these tombs were really used or were only made to be interred with the dead. The ware seems so friable that it is difficult to understand how it could bear the rough usage of a semi-barbarous people. In many of the barrows fragments of another kind of pottery have been discovered scattered among the earth, unornamented and better baked. Only one vessel of this type was found sufficiently perfect to be restored.

THE CHINA OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS.

III.

THE Washington plate (Fig. 11) belongs to Mrs. E. A. Blackwell, of Trenton, and is a very valuable specimen of English pottery with an American subject. The blue is quite dark, but not so brilliant as dark blues generally are. The central shield represents the south front of the White House as it originally looked. In the dinner-plates (the illustration shows a tea-plate) this picture is larger, including trees and deer. The shield is upheld by figures of Justice and Liberty, the former wearing Masonic emblems and ho'ding in an oval frame a portrait of Washington with his name above. Under the figures are the words "Liberty and Independence." Large flowers above and fruits below fill in the centre. The border is composed of festoons and stars, fifteen in number, each festoon holding the name of a State. The age of the pottery could not easily have a more certain indication than this, the first two States after the original thirteen (Vermont and Kentucky) having been admitted in 1791 and 1792. Of course the pottery was made before the admission of the sixteenth State, and it may be dated 1793. The historical value of such a piece of "old blue" is very great. It will last a thousand years if cared for, and its worth will increase with every decade. It is marked: "Warranted Staffordshire, Clews," around a crown, impressed.

As a work of art, Fig. 12, a very large dinner-plate, is the most valuable yet given. The blue is rich and dark. The central picture, "The Escape of the Mouse," is from a design by Sir David Wilkie, while the border is composed of flowers, scrolls, and shells beautifully arranged. The marks are: "Warranted Staffordshire, Clews," around a crown, impressed, and "The Escape of the Mouse, from Wilkie's Designs," in an ornamental blue scroll. This plate belongs to Mrs. D. C. Forney, of Washington.

The cup and saucer (Fig. 13) are of light blue pottery, with a picture of a Gothic chapel and borders in graceful scroll-work. I have called it "Up to the Blue," in remembrance of an old Kentucky lady who was very fond of coffee and who was remarkable for always passing her cup several times during the meal and asking to have it filled "up to the blue." She was an inveterate visitor and gossip, and in this way the phrase became familiar to all her neighbors. The inner blue borders of the cup of the "olden time" generally covered half the depth, so that "up to the blue" was equivalent to asking for half a cup. This was made at Tunstall in Staffordshire, in 1780 and is marked, "W. Adams & Son." It has likewise, in a blue scroll the word "Coccinea" and a crown, and also a square impressed mark. So many works and potters existed in Staffordshire that the changes in marks are almost without end. Burslem, Tunstall, Longport, Davenport, Friburg, Lane End, Longton, Clews, Adams, Hanley, and many other marks are found, Some are names of potteries and others of potters.

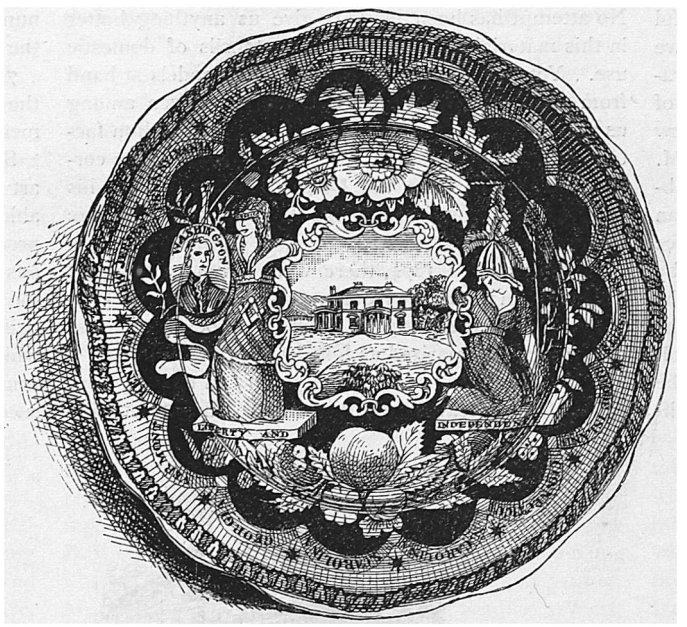


FIG. 11.—WASHINGTON PLATE.

The palm platter (Fig. 14) is of hard porcelain and is doubtless Oriental. The decoration is in two shades of blue, and the ware is probably the same as the Madras plaque (Fig. 9). The under side of the brim is decorated and the blue mark is plainly to be seen, but cannot be deciphered, beneath an American eagle in black, placed there, no doubt, upon the order of some sea captain or other American purchaser. It is evidently very old, and was picked up at a sale in Washington. The ware is muc' like the Canton porcelain.



FIG. 12.—WILKIE PLATE. "THE ESCAPE OF THE MOUSE."

The handsome reticulated fruit-dish (Fig. 15) is owned by Dr. J. M. Toner, of Washington. The blue bordering is of willow pattern design, and the mark is "Riley" in blue John and Richard Riley were potters at Burslem in the last years of the last century and the beginning of the present. The dish will hold probably two quarts, and is a graceful and beautiful specimen.

MARY E. NEALY.

A PORCELAIN MANTEL-PIECE.

A MANTEL-PIECE of hard and soft porcelain has been constructed by a Swedish company. The London Pottery Gazette thus describes it: It stands twelve feet high, and its general color is lavender and celadon, picked out with gold, but there are other colors blending with these, and making a harmonious whole of great delicacy and richness. The fire-place is surrounded with a beautiful border of flowers and leaves in white porcelain picked out with gold. The columns on either side are divided into plain panels of lavender and gold, separated by richly ornamented medallions. Above the columns is a frieze with scroll-work of singularly beautiful design in celadon, lavender, and fine tracery in gold, while above that again is the white porcelain shelf, resembling in its purity and polish the richest marble. Above this, in the centre of a long horizontal panel ornamented with an elegant scroll pattern in relief, is a charmingly modelled figure of Cupid, in the round, a most beautifully executed porcelain. Just over the Cupid, in a niche prepared for it, is an Etruscan vase standing some three feet high. The design and coloring of this vase may be said to be the motif for the rest of the chimney-piece, which is, so to speak, built up around this central figure. On either side of the vase are columns, banded into diamonds below, and ornamented above with medallions containing the insignia of the arts and sciences. The whole space between the niche and columns is filled with scroll-work, highly elaborated, yet of the most chaste design. The upper part of this superb work is in harmony with the richness of its lower portion. While the ornamentation is equally elaborate, it is lighter in color and treatment, and gives an effect of finish which is altogether satisfactory. Its purity and harmony of design are admirable.

FURTHER HINTS FOR CHINA PAINTERS.

ABOUT a year ago we noticed at length in THE ART AMATEUR (October, 1879) an admirable guide for amateur pottery painters by Mr. E. Campbell Hancock, imported by Messrs. Scribner & Welford. We have lately received from Messrs. J. Marsching & Co., of 21 Park Place, N. Y., the same work considerably enlarged, and bearing their imprint in connection with that of the London publishers. The most important addition consists of instructions to amateur glass-painters, and beside this we are given, as an appendix, the valuable little treatise on "Pottery and Porcelain," reprinted from the South Kensington Hand-books. "The Amateur Pottery and Glass Painter" is the new title of the volume. We select from the chapters on over-glaze painting some examples of the valuable hints and instructions with which the work abounds:

Paste for Raised Gold is a color made to raise or model subjects on the wares, to be afterward covered with gold, silver, platinum, bronzes, etc. It must be used alone, and some practice is required in order to work it to perfection; therefore a few hints upon the manner of mixing are given. The color being placed upon the palette, a small portion of fat oil must be thoroughly rubbed in with the palette-knife; turpentine may now be added, and the whole remixed well. It should then be about the consistence of color prepared for oil-painting. The artist should now spread it again over the palette, and well breathe into it with the mouth, during which time it must be remixed, in order that the moisture from the breath may be well incorporated with the color. A little turpentine may be added, if necessary, during the process; the color will then be like a paste, and pretty stiff. The brush—of a size proportioned to the kind of work in hand—must be dipped into turpentine and worked into the color—not full, however. Then, as for impasting, this color must be used with the point of the brush, the artist

should pick up on the point some color by pushing the brush underneath, and then drop upon the ware the point of color in the exact spot it is intended to occupy. If it has been misplaced, no "boggling" should be attempted in order to move it: it must be dropped exactly where it is intended to stand. If too much fat is in it, it will be inclined to run about, and would blister in the kiln. If, however, this is only slight, it may be checked by immediately blowing from the open mouth a full breath on the spot. This should be done in any case. The impasting may be repeated until the modelled spot has reached the form or height desired, when, after drying and firing, it will be found to have remained just as it was applied, and to be of a dead yellow surface. It is now ready for the application of the metal, which is applied to it as upon ordinary white glazed ware. Very beautiful effects are produced by this process, heightened by means of the reflected light produced by the chasing tool. The appearance of the work will be like modelled gold. Raised lines of gold may be done by running the lines in paste for raised gold, first by means of the wheel, and after firing, covering them with gold, as above described. The paste must not be worked quite so thick for this purpose.

White Enamel is a pearly, semi-opaque paste, somewhat of the character of "flake-white" in oils. It is an exceedingly useful color in proper hands, as with it points of light may be judiciously added on the top of the finished work where it would have been impossible to leave the white china—as, for instance, a point of light in an eye. It answers a necessary purpose, but it must be used with great discrimination. Broad patches of enamel on finished paintings always indicate the work of the novice, a far better and softer effect being produced by taking out the lights in the first painting. Where lights must be put in by means of enamel, and they are not required to be pure white, color may be added with good effect, the result being a sparkling appearance caused by the impasto. It must be put on pretty thickly and mixed after the manner of paste for raised gold, and dropped just where it is intended to remain. This, however, is by no means the only use to which white enamel may be put. Fine results are possible by painting—or rather modelling with a pencil—flowers (particularly prominent ones) in "enamel," on a ground already laid and fired. To do this, the color must be "plumped" on thickly, the necessary form being preserved by going round the edges with the pencil-stick; when, after firing, colors may be painted on the enamel and the leaves and stems painted in. For this purpose the hard enamel should be used; or if the "medium," great care must be exercised in firing gently. Another application of this color is for work known as imitation of Limoges enamel. The subject is, for this purpose, painted on a deep mazarine blue or other colored ground, the lights "put on" and softened down to the ground, which, showing through the thin wash, gives the shadows. Very fine examples of this work are in existence. In appearance it resembles "pâte sur pâte." When well done, it is exceedingly soft and beautiful. A general wash of transparent color, such as light Sèvres or blue-greens, all over the subject, adds to the effect. White enamel can also be used in decoration for spots resembling pearls. It must be treated for this purpose as paste for raised gold, to which the reader is referred.

Gilding.—Prepared gold is in the form of a slate-colored powder, unground. A quantity is usually ground and mixed with its necessary fat oil, as, if kept covered up, it does not deteriorate, as would be the case with colors. It will get a little fatter, but that will not be of any material consequence. Gold must be ground in turpentine with a clean glass muller, and on a clean glass slab, "perfectly fine;" indeed, it cannot be ground too much. Turpentine must be added, to replace that which evaporates during the process. Some little time will be required to do this properly. When finished, allow the turpentine to evaporate somewhat, and add rather more fat oil than is required for colors—just enough to allow the gold to work solidly yet freely, as too much will cause it to boil or blister in the kiln. It may now be scraped up carefully, keeping in view the precious nature of the material, and put aside into some small pot or wide-mouthed bottle, which can be well corked, using from it as required. The slab above mentioned should be kept for this work alone, and the muller also, to prevent wasting the gold. It is now in the form of a brownish-black color, and should be about the consistence of well-prepared oil colors. A special palette and brushes are required for gold, still to prevent waste from cleaning. The brushes or pencils generally known as "tracers" and "liners" are used, and occasionally, where large surfaces of paste for raised gold are to be covered, "shaders." The very best, namely, those with the most "spring," should be selected.

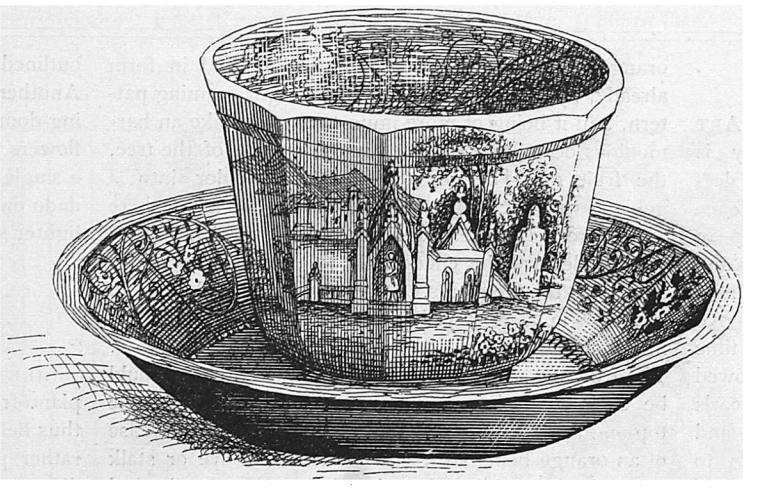


FIG. 13.—CUP AND SAUCER. "UP TO THE BLUE."

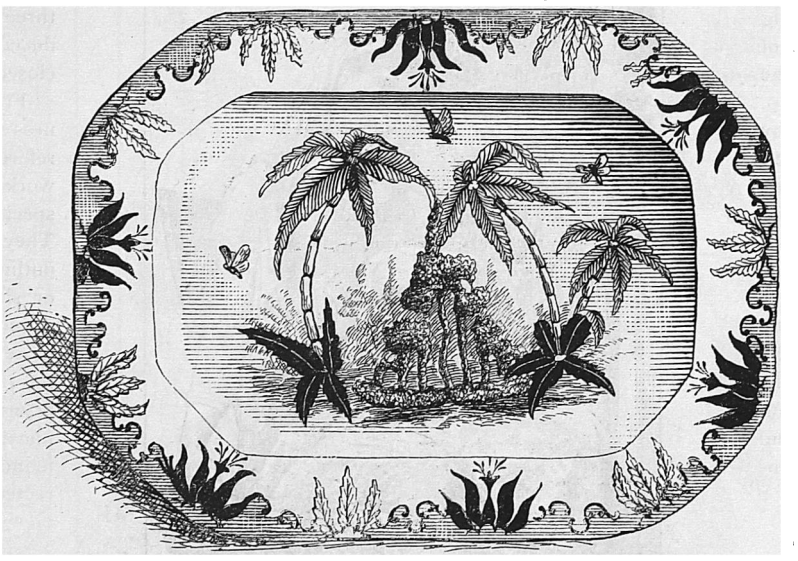


FIG. 14.—PALM PLATTER.

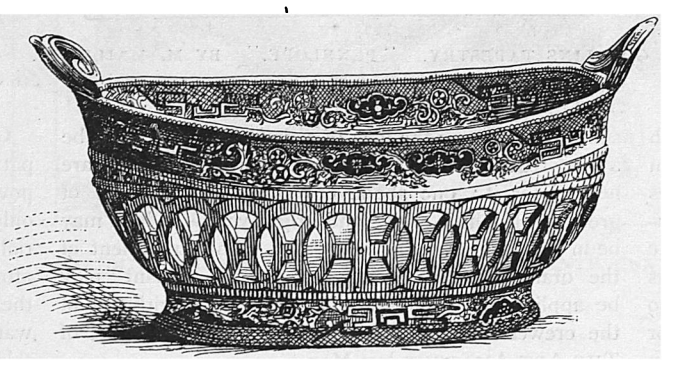


FIG. 15.—RETICULATED FRUIT-DISH.

Pencils used in gold are usually kept unwashed. After the work is done the gold should be worked out of them upon the palette and well scraped together, and an inverted saucer placed over it to keep it clean. The hairs of the brushes may then be put straight, and the brushes slightly dipped in fat oil thinned with a little turpentine; this will keep them soft for any reasonable time. If, however, they do become hard, they need not be discarded, but may be softened by dipping them frequently in turpentine, and holding them before the fire, when a little patience will soon recover their elasticity. On no account hurry them by attempting to open the hairs, or by bending them on the palette, as that would break them. All these precautions are necessary, not for the value of the brushes themselves, but on account of the gold contained in them. The writer has known gilders keep a good gold pencil which has become a favorite for many years by these means.

In applying the gold to the china, it must be borne in mind that the object is to cover the wares with a thin but even coating. Putting on a thick coat will not add in the least to its richness, as it is opaque, and the surface only is seen. It must not, however, be a wash, but a solid, even coat, no ridges being left by the pencil. As the turpentine evaporates quickly from the gold in working, a little should be added frequently, and the gold remixed; the pencil also requires frequent dipping in turpentine, to keep the hairs all free and open. Gold, and everything connected therewith, must be kept scrupulously clean, and color on no account mixed with it. It is best to keep a special turpentine-pot for gold alone, as some color will settle at the bottom of the turpentine used for colors, into which, if used, the tip of the gold pencil would probably be dipped, and some of it would be transferred to the palette, spoiling the gold at once.

Gold is prepared to fire at the rose-color, or, as it is sometimes called, gold heat. After firing it appears a mat yellow gold color, and requires burnishing to give it brilliancy. If under-fired, it will rub up under the burnishing tool; if over fired, it will be sunk to some extent into the surface of the china, and will not burnish at all. This preparation of gold cannot be used on colors, unless on such as are prepared for, and fired in, the "hard kiln." Another preparation, however, called unfluxed gold, is made to fire on thin grounds of color fired in the enamel kiln; but the novice is recommended to confine himself to that generally known and understood by the firemen. Although gold cannot be worked upon color, color may be worked on gold; and very beautiful effects will result by laying a ground of gold, and tracing red or Brunswick brown diapers, or figure or other subjects upon it.

AT the Choisy-le-Roi show-rooms in Paris a correspondent recently noticed some beautiful plaques, chiefly round-ivory body, with raised flowers, or views, done in mat gold or platinum, hand-sculptured; a peculiarity is that the decoration is on the convex side of the dish. He says: "They look very well fixed on a black wooden easel, or framed for hanging. The prices are high, but they are real works of art. Debra is the name of the sculptor. Each piece is signed."

IT was a brilliant period in the history of the royal porcelain factory in the Austrian capital when Joseph Leithner, the chemist, prepared the colors, inventing a black from uranium which gave grounds of the finest effect, and employed platina in the solid and brilliant state, and a decoration in gold, burnished in relief upon dead gold, now rare and sought after. In the same factory were employed Schindler, George Perl, Antony Gassi, and Ferstler, all distinguished decorators. The establishment celebrated its centenary in 1818, when its staff consisted of five hundred persons. But it was a costly luxury, and in 1856 it was suppressed by a decision of the Reichsrath, and the drawings, a part of the models, the ceramic collections, and the library, were deposited in the Austrian Museum. In the early days of the factory the paste used was slightly tinged with brown, but it became very white after having been mixed with the kaolin of Moravia.